PUNJAB NOTES

Raja Sadiqullah's *The Fragrance of Seven Colours*

By Mushtaq Soofi

Sadiqullah's *The Fragrance of Seven Colours (Pehla Puur)* has recently been published by Punjab Institute of Language, Art and Culture (Pilac), Lahore in three scripts. Mr. Muzzaffar Ghaffar, as far as I remember, was the first to use three scripts for his master series of edited classics and ancient texts. The book is welcome because English translations of contemporary poetry are far and few, and of good poetry fewer.

Imagine a little of Najam Husain Syed has been translated into English who pioneered deconstructing our colonial past that has shaped our present-day life. As to the view that poetry is what is lost in translation one should not forget that the best of poetry from foreign languages and cultures has reached us through translation because the best is never lost. It is colloquial and purely local which refuses to be rendered. But the translator should be competent.

When Rabassa's translation of *One Hundred years of Solitude* came out, it took the world by storm and Marquez said that it was better than his original. But most people take translation as drudgery rather than a piece of creative work.

Note on the poet says; "Raja Sadiqullah, a poet and writer, was born in Wazirabad. His ancestors belong to a princely state from Rajouri in the Pir Panjal Range of Kashmir where they had lived for more than 650 years. They were deposed and forcibly expelled when Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh. This painful legacy of displacement and exile has left an indelible mark on Raja Sadiqullah, which is clearly reelected in his writings."

Apart from his literary pursuits, Sadiqullah is a retired banker and a cricketer who played at first class level. However his true passion lies in promoting and preserving Punjabi language and literature. Raja Sadiqullah has two published books of Punjabi to his credit– With two more– one of poetry and another of prose- currently in the pipeline for publication. His father and grandfather were also poets and writers.

It's interesting to note that Wazirabad is located on the Grand Trunk Road, which is one of the oldest and the longest highways that connects India (Pakistan as well) to Central Asia. It touches important power centres such as Kolkata, Delhi, Amritsar, Peshawar, and a score of other cities. It can be described as a subcontinental information highway. Those who lived close to it were rightly thought to be socially and politically more aware because of their easy access to what was happening in the centres. Trade caravans raised dust on the road, invaders peel it off, scholars and mystics, in search of refuse, enliven its silence with their stories. Rebellions against tyrannical rajas reached the people quickly.

Another feature of this town is that a big nullah, Palkho Nullah, brushes past it. It carries quite a quantity of water which is a sanctuary of a large number of local and migratory birds. Just beyond it flows 'love river' Chenab which has been home to the largest number of classical tales such as Sohni Mahiwal, Heer Ranjha, and Sahiba Mirza. "We are transferred from place to place / We know each other / We have similar appearances / We have the same names / And we belong to the same place / We are under the deep shadow of generations / Beyond the Palkhoo stream is our village / Where flows the eternal river Chenab." The intimacy of the acts as tactile feeling These are the landscapes where his topophilia come from. "We can also talk of those Mallard / who, after the winter snow, embarked from Siberia on a long -haul flight /Seeking warm sunshine over blue waters / Now with their eyes, perched on shadow's edges, they stare at our dampened selves / Those multi-colours sparrows whose singing was laden with wailing / They came in search of food / along with butterflies, they too were hovering over Spring flowers / Now cages within the confines of of our children infatuation, they will weep and weep till the children grow up or to the time when the cage, the birds, and the flight will merge imperceptibly." What a wonderful translation free of sentimentality and saccharine whispers.

Saqidullah poetry evokes images and scenes lived and forgotten in a world that is as somnolent as it is wakeful, and dreaming. Sometimes the strangest of them. "Just a single look came to annihilate it all / She turned her eyes and everything was transformed / This is the appearance of someone else / This is the sprouting season like a shine / Tweeting of of the birds their feed / Again the eye changed / And as if the dust has made its assault / Drizzle / The crow got tired, waiting / It was a fleeting moment / Her look is making the concealed visible / The look of that eye itself made all the difference."

A good translator needs good poetry and good poetry needs a good translator. Enjoy the book. **— soofi01@hotmail.com**

Two 'human traffickers' arrested

By Our Correspondent

TOBA TEK SINGH: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Faisalabad composite circle on Sunday claimed to have arrested two suspects, one of them allegedly linked to a human

trafficking and forced beggary network.

As per an FIA official, the suspects, identified as Ismail and Salman Munawar, were arrested from different areas of Faisalabad. He says Ismail, along with his accomplices, is allegedly involved in sending people to Malaysia, where they are forced to beg.

The official said the suspect had sent one Khalid Mehmood to Malaysia, who was forced to beg by a network there. The victim's return ticket was cancelled and he wasfound unconscious in hotel room, from where he was shifted to the hospital, but he died.

A case was registered against Ismail on the report of the Pakistani High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, the official adds.

He says raids are underway to arrest the agents and suspect's facilitators involved in the racket, who will also placed on no-fly list.

He says that the other suspect, Munawar, was running an illegal travel agency. During a raid, the officials recovered a mobile phone and fake stamp papers from his possession. He says the suspect was receiving millions of rupees from people on the pretext of sending them abroad, without having a licence.

MAN DIES: A man allegedly died after being run over by a speeding tractor-trolley near Maluwana Mor on Bhakkar Road, Jhang, on Sunday.

Rescue 1122 said the deceased,identified as Sikandar Hayat (70), was crossing the road when hit by the vehicle.

LPG plant sealed for overcharging

By Our Correspondent

SAHIWAL: On public complaints, the local district administration sealed an LPG plant for overcharging and supplying cylinders to retailers at inflated prices ranging from Rs900 to Rs1,000, in violation of Ogra's standard rates.

Reports said Assistant CommissionerMaham Wahid during a raid sealed the plant and directed its management to revise prices in line with Ogra's notified rates.

As per reports, local LPG shop owners had sharply increased prices, selling gas at Rs290-300 per kg instead of the official Rs 201 per kg. This sudden hike sparked anger among consumers.

Ogra's official rate list, issued on Nov 25, clearly sets the price of an 11.8 kg cylinder at Rs2,378, with the per kg rate fixed at Rs201 for the entire country. However, in Sahiwal, LPG plant owners jointly raised prices and leaving retailers with no option to currently sell cylinders at Rs2,900–3,000, far above the regulated price. The situation alarmed local consumers, leading to widespread online complaints at portal and to the local administration.

Investigations revealed that LPG plant owners were supplying cylinders to retailers at inflated rates, prompting the AC's raid.

Sources further disclosed that inSahiwal district, five LPG plants - Chiltan Gas Plant, Ravi Gas Plant, Baba Farid Gas Plant, Abdul Sattar Petroleum Gas, and Nova LPG Plant- are operational.

The owners of these plants made a 'cartel' and overcharged Rs900-1000 against each cylinder from retailers who in turn passed on the burden to local consumers.

Dawn has learnt that an Ogra inspection team is also visiting Sahiwal to investigate why LPG plant owners in the district are collectively overpricing gas, causing distress among consumers.

Over 5,000 cops perform by-poll duty

LAHORE: Lahore police executed comprehensive and effective security arrangements to provide a peaceful environment during the 2025 by-election in the provincial metropolis.

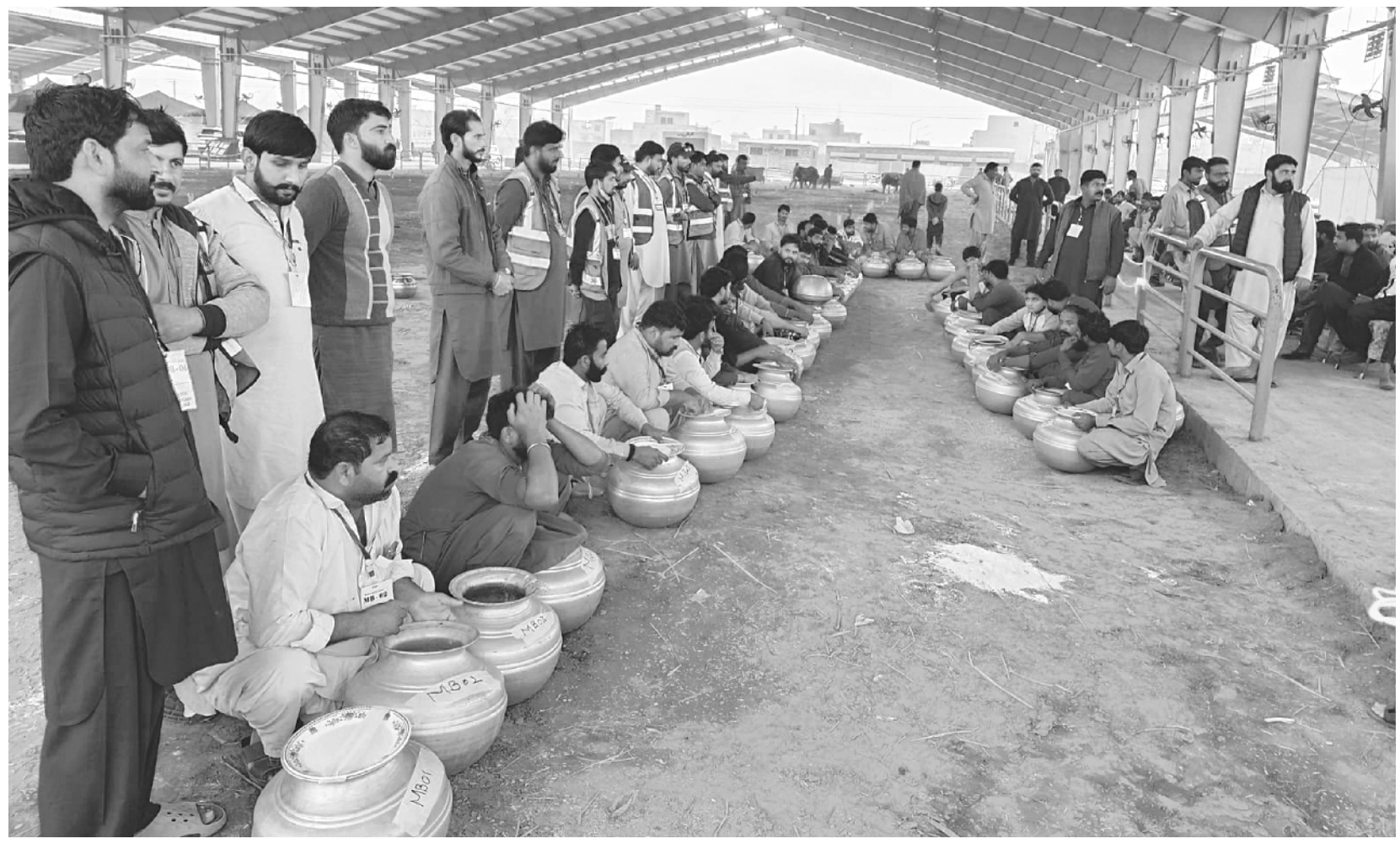
More than 5,000 police officers and personnel, including woman constables, were deployed for election duty, a spokesperson for Lahore police said in a statement issued here on Sunday.

As many as 132 pickets and 322 checkpoints were also set up across the city, where security remained on high alert, he added.

The spokesperson further said that three SPs, six SDPOs and 24 SHOs supervised security operations in their respective jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, CCPO Bilal Siddique Kamyana stated that a well-coordinated security plan was executed to facilitate the peaceful conduct of the by-election. He said the efficient arrangements ensured that law and order remained fully under control and the citizens cast their votes in a peaceful atmosphere.

The security operations were closely monitored through control rooms and CCTV cameras. Meanwhile, Dolphin Force and Police Response Unit (PRU) teams also carried out continuous patrolling across the city. **— Correspondent**



LAHORE: Participants in a milk production contest at the cattle show. — Dawn

Punjab Cattle Show ends with a bang

The event features an array of activities

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The two-day Punjab Cattle Show-2025 concluded here on Sunday, gathering a number of animal traders and breeders who showcased their well-reared buffaloes, cows etc at Shahpur Kanjran cattle market—Punjab's biggest cattle trading facility.

"It was a wonderful show, as we, along with many others, presented our best animals for the public at large. Our buffaloes and cows have participated in various contests held to evaluate milk production, breeding and health," a cattle farmer told *Dawn* on telephone on Sunday.

"Such shows must be held on a regular basis annually, not only in Lahore, but also in other districts, as it encourages farmers to focus on their animals' health, milk production and breeding for better earning," he adds.

The event participants celebrated Punjab's livestock heritage, farming excellence and vibrant culture while promoting agribusiness, sustainable livestock practices, and rural entrepreneurship.

They showcased the diversity and quality of Punjab's cattle and livestock.

The show engaged public, farmers, and industries in a vibrant cultural setting, providing a networking platform for agricultural brands, livestock experts, and entrepreneurs to promote tourism, heritage and local craftsmanship.

The concept behind the show, according to a document prepared by the Punjab Cattle Market Management and Development Company (PCMMDC), was to hold a two-day event, featuring livestock competitions and exhibitions, Lok Virsa Mela (presenting folk arts, crafts and cultural stalls), a Food Street by leading brands, music concerts and cultural performances.

It also featured exhibitions by fertilizer, feed and agricultural equipment companies, besides interactive family activities and a 'Kids Zone'.

A PCMMDC official says that participation by farmers and breeders in the event increased this time as compared to last year's figures. "Many companies in the businesses of livestock, veterinary medicines, animal husbandry and life sciences, engineering, manufacturing tractors and animal farming equipment, also participated in the show enthusiastically.

'Mysterious' disease kills 28 camels in Cholistan

Herders complain about lack of govt help to treat their livestock

By Irfan-ul-Haq

RAHIM YAR KHAN: At least 28 camels have died during the last three weeks due to an influenza-like "mysterious" disease at various villages located deep in the Cholistan desert areas falling in the district.

Reports say that 16 of the camels of Pahore clan died at Chak 172-P in the Cholistan area's remote Dhudi Union Council of Kot Sabza town in Sadiqabad tehsil of Rahim Yar Khan district, some 62kms from here.

According to local camel owners, including Bakhat Ali, Allah Baksh, Falak Sher and Maloo of Pahore clan, their camels suffered a mysterious disease attack during which they initially showed influenza-like symptoms, with a fluid flowing from their nostrils, causing breathing issues among the animals. After a couple of days, they say, the camels became weak, with their legs trembling, and at last they died.

They say that each camel was worth around Rs1 million, adding that it is a huge loss for them as camel herding was their only source of income.

Two other herders -- Jam Abdul Sattar and Faqir Baksh Laar -- both of Chah Kallarwali village located deep in the Cholistan desert, say they lost nine of their camels to a disease with similar symptoms. They claimed the prices of their animals were higher, ranging between Rs1.2m and Rs1.4m, because of their health and breed.

Similarly a Cholistan resident, Jam Ilyas Niaz, said that his friend, a camel owner of Fazalwala Khouh, lost three of his camels due to this viral disease.

He says that he himself started medical treatment of his livestock following reports of camels death and purchased a bottle of vaccine worth Rs900 and an injection for Rs1,050. He added that after the treatment his camels were now in better condition. He further says there were around 15,000 camels in the Cholistan area falling in R Y Khan district.

All these camel owners complained that despite the deaths of their animals, neither any veterinary team, nor Mobile Veterinary Dispensary (MVD) unit, visited their remote abodes to examine their livestock for treatment.

According to district livestock department sources, there are four MVD units to provide livestock treatment facilities in remote Cholistan areas.

They say that the tehsil and district level livestock officers were mostly busy in performing magisterial or other administrative duties for price control and monitoring, assigned by the district administration, ignoring their actual job.

Livestock Deputy Director Dr Tahir Gulzar, when contacted, pledged to answer *Dawn* queries on the issue, but did not respond later.

However, according to a handout issued by district information office, Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa took notice of the camel deaths in Cholisitan and sought a report from the livestock department. The DC instructed the livestock staff to take immediate steps to vaccinate camels in the affected areas, adding that the district administration is monitoring the situation.

Human trafficking

Surge in passengers offloading irritates businessmen and tourists

By Waseem Ashraf Butt

GUJRAT: Nine passengers traveling to an African country to further proceed towards European destinations were offloaded from a flight at the Sialkot International Airport by the Immigration authorities on Sunday.

The rate of offloaded passengers from certain cities, age groups and specific destinations has seen a surge during the last couple of months. However, theheightened alertness by the immigration staff is irritating for genuine businessmen and tourists.

An official of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said that the Immigration authorities had identified a group of passengers traveling by flight number FZ316 to African countryDjibouti via Dubai (United Arab Emirates) from Sialkot Airport.

Adding, he said that the passengers namely Tassawar Abbas, Muhammad Siddique, Baber Hussain, Muhammad Saleem, Akhlaq Ahmed, Muqarrabul Hassan, Muhammad Talha, Imran Sikandar and Usman Ali could not satisfy the immigration officials about the purpose of their travel.

During further investigation, they revealed that they had struck a deal with human traffickers and agents in Rs 4.2million each to send them Italy via Libyan Coast on ship as they had to reach Libya after reaching Djibouti.

The offloaded passengers belonged to Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Faisalabad and Sheikhupura districts of Punjab. The passengers were later handed over to the FIA Composite Circle, Gujranwala, for further legal action.

On the other hand a number of genuine businessmen and tourists have lodged a strong protest against the `harsh policy' to offload even those going for business trips or tourism.

President of Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahmed Hassan Mattu told Dawn that he had received several complaints from members of the Gujrat chamber about being offloaded from Lahore, Sialkot and other airports despite having genuine travel documents and recommendation letters by the GtCCI.

He said that the business fraternity had been very concerned over such a harsh policy of FIA Immigration as genuine businessmen should not be stopped or bothered at the airports.

Some overseas Pakistanis too have lodged such complaints at the Sialkot and other airports.

President of Uk-Pak Businessmen Chamber Rashid Khan, while speaking to chamber members last week, had narrated his ordeal at the hands of Sialkot Airport staff and lodged strong protest against what he termed a discouraging attitude which should be noticed by the higher authorities.

Some other expatriate Pakistanis belonging to Gujrat region have also complained about the current policy of offloading passengers.

When asked about the reasons of offloading, Gujranwala FIA zone director Muhammad Bin Ashraf told *Dawn* that there was no harsh policy or new directions issued in this regard of offloading passengers with fake documents or suspicious motivess.